



United States Senator  
**Richard Shelby**  
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



## Alabama Gains in BRAC

*By: Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)*

On November 8, the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) report will become final. Since the Secretary of Defense first announced his recommendations for BRAC in May, military bases across the country have presented strong arguments based on military value to the Commission. Alabama was no different.

The Alabama delegation, in concert with local base communities, spent the last several years dedicated to making certain that the Department of Defense, and later the BRAC commission, were well-informed about the tremendous military value Alabama bases play in our national defense. And all of that hard work has paid off.

Our biggest victories came from the Commission's reversal of two of DoD's recommendations that would have removed missions, personnel, and airframes from the state. Maxwell Air Force Base and Gunter Annex was the only Active Duty Alabama military facility recommended by the Department of Defense to lose a mission to a facility in another state. The Operations Sustainment and Systems Group (OSSG), located at Gunter, was slated to relocate to Hanscom Air Force Base, MA, in a research and development (R&D) consolidation. As I continually argued to the Commission, this recommendation had an underlying flaw – the OSSG is a 24/7 operations and sustainment mission for the Air Force, DoD, and joint information technology systems. It is not an R&D group. I am very pleased that the Commission decided to strike this recommendation. It showed that our position was rock solid and that keeping the OSSG in Montgomery not only has significant military value,

but its location in Montgomery is good for the warfighter.

The second recommendation that the Commission overturned related to DoD's flawed Air Guard realignments. The 117th Air Refueling Wing will remain in Birmingham. This decision reinforces what I have always known, that the 117th is clearly fulfilling a critical mission for the nation, and it will continue to do so into the future from its Alabama base.

Redstone Arsenal, fundamental to the Army's extensive missile and space research and development (R&D) programs, will increase by up to 4,000 jobs through the addition of new R&D work. Already home to a majority of Space and Missile Defense Command's (SMDC) missions and a number of Missile Defense Agency (MDA) functions, I am proud that Redstone will gain SMDC's headquarters and additional MDA missions. Further, Redstone will welcome Alabama's first four star command to the state with the arrival of the Army Materiel Command's Headquarters.

Anniston Army Depot was slated to increase in workload and personnel by gaining work from the closure of Red River Army Depot, TX. Much to my disappointment, the Commission recommended that Red River remain open, even though I believe that there was sufficient justification to close that facility due to the excess capacity in the Army industrial base. While Anniston did not gain in this BRAC round, I have every confidence that Anniston will continue to serve the maintenance needs of the Army now and into the future as our Armed Forces continue their work in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere the War on Terrorism requires our presence.

With Army and Air Force rotary wing training already a major mission at Fort Rucker, the installation was set to receive the Army's Aviation Logistics School through realignment. Unfortunately, this did not occur. I believe this consolidation would have created manpower savings, consistency in training, and force stabilization. We fight jointly and we must train jointly. It would have made sense to move the Aviation Logistics School to Fort Rucker. Yet while the Commission decision means that Fort Rucker will not be the recipient of the new mission, I am confident that this installation will continue to grow as the Army brings forth new missions and platforms for the aviation branch.

Although not in Alabama, the relocation of the Army's Armor School to Fort Benning will have a major and positive effect on Phenix City and eastern Alabama. This realignment will increase permanent personnel at the installation by 2,300, with an additional 8,000 students rotating in annually for training.

It is clear that the Commission recognized the value of our installations, and the final outcome of the BRAC process has Alabama well situated for the future. Throughout this process, Alabama's Congressional delegation and military base communities worked diligently to provide consistent arguments to the Commission based on clear military value, indisputable data, and solid statistics. It was always our goal to underscore how Alabama plays an integral role in the defense of our country. I believe we accomplished our mission, and in doing so, we were able to increase our already strong military presence around the state.

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**FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: NOVEMBER 1, 2005**



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